

WASHINGTON, D. C., SUNDAY, JANUARY 22, 1910.

A SABBATH FOR THE CLERGY OF WASHINGTON

Views of Ministers on Conditions Responsible for Deaths of Such Leaders as Bishop Satterlee, Father Stafford, Dr. Butler, and Rev. Mr. Fishburn.

When Sunday comes and the work-a-day world takes one day of relaxation, there is a single class the efforts of which are increased rather than decreased. Those who minister to the spiritual welfare of mankind have no day of rest, for, following six days of activity, their seventh day finds them laboring more earnestly than before.

It is safe to say there is hardly a minister in Washington for whom the return, whether in a financial way or in the enjoyment of the comforts of life, is as great as that of men in the other professions.

The writer of the appended article has made a careful study of conditions in this city, having interviewed many of the most prominent of the local clergy and parishioners. The data here presented is authentic and should speak volumes. It does not mean that the minister is dissatisfied with the results of his labor, or that he is unappreciative. It means that in many cases he is taxed beyond his physical strength, and unless death comes, a nervous breakdown is the outcome.

By JEAN CABELL O'NEILL.

A recent issue of The Washington Herald mentioned the illness of the much-loved Rev. Dr. Frederick Power, of Vermont Avenue Christian Church; the death of two of the local clergy; the anniversary mass held at St. Patrick's in memory of the brilliant Father Stafford, and the eulogies for Rev. Dr. Butler and Rev. Mr. Fishburn, of youthful promise, in Rev. Dr. Radcliffe's review of the year.

To this list of local tragedies might well be added the death of Bishop Satterlee, still so fresh in the minds of all who knew him.

Why is disease and death so busy among the men of pure life and high thought? Can the city spare them? Do we let our ministers minister too greatly to our needs, and fancied needs?

The most persistent and of necessity consistent breakers of the commandment of rest are the clergy. There is no Sabbath for them; every class of society has some day it can call individual, save the noble army of the workers in the Lord's harvest field.

The spirit of conservation is felt in many directions, why not devise some plan by which the strength and mental attainment—the product of years of study and experience—of the brilliant band of men who are devoting their lives to the betterment of society can be conserved?

Whatever the individual opinion or creed there is little question in the public mind that the teaching of the churches make for good citizenship, and the love of God and love of country are relative emotions. Of necessity the busiest day among the pastors is the day the laity is resting, Sunday, but is that any reason the pastor should not have some other day in the week on which he can rest? One day in every seven days to rest is a Divine command and even the most worldly minded see in it the quintessence of Divine wisdom.

Ministers Hard Worked.

Though Sunday is a hard day on the "man of God," the services performed on that day and within the walls of the church are only a small part of the duty of the present-day minister. Among other and ever-present duties are the visits to the sick, services of prayer with the dying and over the dead; marriages and baptisms, examinations of candidates for admission to membership in the faith. Visits social and visits of condolence; all these are constantly recurrent, never finished duties entirely foreign to the literary end of pastoral work.

To the sympathetic man the sorrows of the members of his flock make to him a heavy part of his daily life; it is as true of the preacher of to-day, if he be the genuine man that as a rule make up this large class, as of the great preacher, Paul, when he so wearily queried: "Who is weak, and I am not weak, who is offended, and I burn not?" Also, is the modern minister like St. Paul, "in weariness and painfulness, in watching often, in fasting and cold—and besides these things that are without that which cometh upon me

daily in the care of all the churches." That the "care of all the churches" is no light matter to the conscientious witness the early close to the brilliant careers of the poet, Bishop Phillips Brooks, and of Father Stafford and Bishop Satterlee.

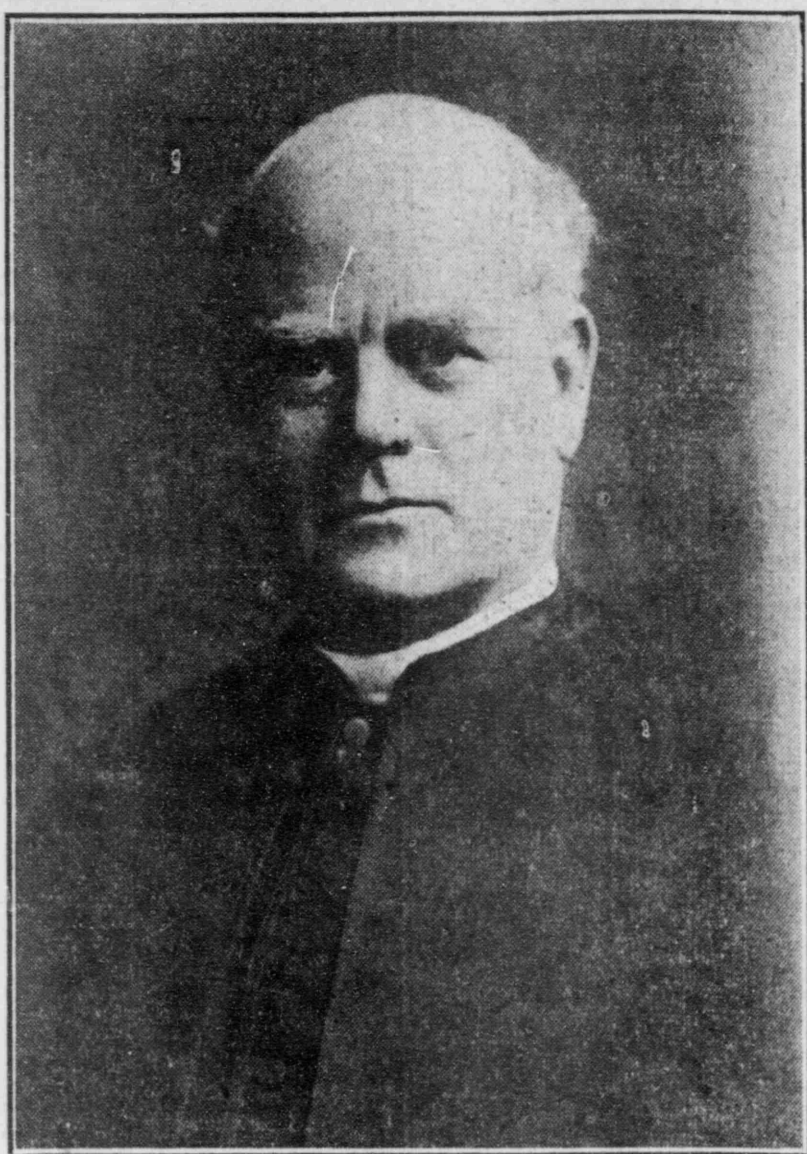
There is no minister within the bounds of Washington City willing to confess to weariness in "his Father's business." The strength of the spirit prevails over the weakness of the flesh. Though none of them view themselves with any degree of pity, they know it is a condition and not a theory which confronts them, and that if there is no change in the unnatural strain under which they live, early breakdown will result. Their attitude is of cheerful resignation, they have put their hands to the plow and will look out forward, knowing the certainty of great reward after the good fight.

But to the practical citizen comes the question, are not these men worth saving for earthly work? Does not the city need them for long years? The remedy must come from the public and the consensus of opinion seems to be that it would be practical for each vestry or church council to make arrangement by which one day out of seven should be the minister's own. His Sabbath in which to refresh his soul and body as his heart dictates. When nothing shall be asked of him, when he can follow the example of his Lord and "retire to a place apart" and refresh his own spiritual nature, and rest his tired nerves; where he can forget the unfinished sermon and find for his own needs "in stones," when he can find "books in the running brooks" and take time to look at the quiet stars and remember Who it is that "binds the sweet influence of Pleiades," or loosens "the hands of Orion."

Need Day of Rest.

The question of the need for a rest day for the clergy was presented to Rev. Dr. Bratenahl, rector of St. Alban's and canon of the Protestant Episcopal Church of Washington. The canon himself is a splendid type of robust Christianity, with mental development, corresponding to his fine physical proportions. He is in close touch with all things pertaining to the advance of the church militant, and his personal zeal is unflagging, yet with the memory of his late bishop's untimely death fresh in his mind he did not hesitate to say in effect, "I read no promise of immunity to the minister of God, who breaks the Fourth Commandment—and we all do it, are forced to do it by circumstances over which we have no control—we have no complaint to make, but we certainly feel that violation of this or any other Divine command will be followed by physical and mental and possibly spiritual deterioration."

The practical, and at the same time, very spiritual rector of the Church of the Ascension, commenting on the remark that the services on Sunday were the easiest part of a rector's duties said, "So true is it that the services performed within the walls of the church are only a small part of the present day minister's

REV. FATHER WILLIAM RUSSELL,
OF ST. PATRICK'S CHURCH.

"The one duty which drains to the utmost the heart of the priest is the service of the confessional."

duty that I do not hesitate to say that Sunday is my day of very lightest, least tiring labor. And this, notwithstanding the following programme for Sundays, I celebrate the Holy Communion at 8 a. m., take the devotional exercises of the Sunday school at 9:30, the regular service of morning prayer and preach at 11 a. m., look in on our Chinese Sunday school at 2:30 p. m., take the children's vesper service at 4:15, and say evening prayer and preach at 8 p. m. There is usually a baptism or an emergency sick call at some time during the day. All this, without clerical assistance, save for the last thirty days. Still Sunday is decidedly my easiest day. I am busier and work more hours every other day in the week than on Sundays. I see my family more, and have more quiet reading on Sunday than any other day.

How to Get Best Results.

"It follows as a necessary result that preparation for all this Sunday work is poorly done—the command of God and nature that man have one day's rest in seven in order to produce the best results—to himself and his fellows is wholly disobeyed by me. My work is such a delight to me that I am not conscious of the strain, but in calm thought I know what the results must be, viz.: physical, mental, and spiritual loss. Who is to blame? No one. My vestry have given me all the assistants for which I have asked. My people trouble me very little about matters that ought not to come to me as their rector. In my work with them I always feel I am getting more than I give. But if my experience is at all usual with the clergy—and I do not doubt that it is—there is great need of some remedy so that the clergy may have one day's rest out of every seven."

"What is the remedy? In my judgment smaller churches and more of them. No minister should have under his pastoral care more people than he can become closely acquainted with in close personal touch by a visit to the homes of such at least three or four times a year. I know my sheep and am known of mine," said the master. It may be that the parishioners are willing not to require or expect this, but in my opinion no man can be a real minister who does not find time and embrace the privilege of doing this.

"Then, too, it is essential that the minister, if he is to be such in reality, should have time for meditation. To be alone, not for study or writing so much as for real meditation—active communion with God, in loving fellowship with the 'Giver of every good and perfect gift.' 'One of the wisest men, wise with a godly wisdom, I ever knew, the dean of a theological seminary taught that every priest of God should have at least one and a half hours each day for such meditation, even if for no other purpose than to keep his own soul safe. I wonder how many can possibly find the time for this.'"

"Under our present system, in the cities at least, there is certainly great need that the Christian minister should keep before him St. Paul's words of caution, 'lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.'"

Must Meet All Demands.

Rev. Father William Russell, of St. Patrick's Church, thinks a provision by which all the clergy should have one rest day out of seven, a fine plan. Not that there is a moment of his life that he does not hold himself in eager readiness to do his Lord's service, but that it is a physical impossibility to be in two places at once, and equally impossible to do two things well at the same moment. It is the efforts to meet all demands and the impossibility of doing so that accounts for much of the nerve strain under which all priests live and under which only the very strongest can keep up for any great length of time.

The one duty, but a most insistent duty, which drains to the utmost the heart of the priest is the service in the confessional. During the whole of the last day of the year when a large proportion of the parish of St. Patrick's came to that solemn duty there were but seven priests to serve, and the intervals of rest were of the briefest and far apart; Father Russell, whose day had begun at dawn, after a long day in the confessional celebrated mass at midnight and did not reach his room until 3:30 a. m. After a few hours of the sleep that comes from complete exhaustion the holy Father was again cheerfully at his duties; but had there been a plan by which he could have slipped away from everybody, and the

sorrows and weakness of his people, and rested and read or walked or done—by way of greatest variety—absolutely nothing, what a splendid gain to his physical and mental nature and how many months added to his most valuable life!

The laity does not intend to be selfish, only it is thoughtless and a bit self-centered; if only the flock would show all possible consideration for the priests and not call on them for trivial matters much nerve force would be conserved. The comment of a very intelligent member of this same parish. In the same connection he told of a plea a tired priest once made to his people to come to confessional earlier in the day, and a little story of a dear old soul who came to him at 10 o'clock at night with "God bless you father, I thought I never would get here, but now that I am here, I will make a general," and the gentle garrulous old lady who hardly knew what sin was rambling on about her small faults for an hour.

Probably there is no minister of wider experience within the city limits than the minister of New York Avenue Presbyterian Church, Dr. Wallace Radcliffe; he has this to say of the "rest day idea":

"The idea is certainly to be approved. It seeks to relieve a great burden. The theory is all right, but the condition will be hard to change."

One of Dr. Radcliffe's parishioners in homely, but practical comment declared that conditions could be changed if there was sufficient unity in a movement. He remarked that a few years ago one would have said that the servants of the city could never have worked together to force from their more or less unwilling masters a uniform day off, but now, Thursday afternoon, weekly, in addition to two Sunday evenings a month are universally given to all the house servants in the city. Again, he cited the case of the New York butchers, who, for years opened shop on Sunday for half day.

When they declared that it was almost as much labor to open and clean up after a half-day, as a whole one and that they would cease to open on Sunday; there was a storm of protest from every quarter. The press took it up and thought the poor who had no ice would be poisoned if meat was purchased the night before; others said the workman's wage often did not reach home Saturday night in time for wife to shop—the butchers persisted and carried their point, and no one seems to have been inconvenienced and these hard working early rising men are relieved.

Demands of Leadership.

A very interesting letter from Rev. John Van Schalk, Jr., for ten years the

DR. ULYSSES G. B. PIERCE,
OF ALL SOULS' UNITARIAN CHURCH.

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beloved pastor of the Church of Our Father, Universalist, says, in part:

"The whole subject which you suggest for consideration is a very much larger one than comprised in the words, 'One day of rest for the minister.' The demand upon the ministry for service is not different than the demand which is being made upon other men who are put in similar positions of leadership in our age. For example, see how many of the brilliant college presidents of our country are breaking down after a few years of service."

"I do not believe that any man can control these matters except the man directly concerned. Agreements made by congregations not to disturb ministers on one day of the week will accomplish something undoubtedly. It is, however, the man himself who must decide as to the disposition of his time. If he lacks self-control or perspective, if he cannot choose between the important and unimportant things of his work, no congregation will be able to help him very much."

"Personally, I have always had a dream of a little log cabin in the woods somewhere within two hours of Washington, to which telephone lines cannot be extended nor visitors penetrate. The only way I can ever expect to have one day in seven is to go to such a log cabin on Sunday night after my work is finished and stay until Tuesday morning. I need such a cabin, and as soon as I can afford it, I propose to have one. You are entirely right in assuming that ministers now organize their work they tell seven days in the week."

Notwithstanding the courageous tone of the letter, there is probably pressing need for that little cabin; The Washington Herald representative chanced to overhear a comment on its writer. The reverend gentleman was passing, when a lady said, "That gentleman has just finished his tenth year as pastor of one of our big churches; his people love the ground he walks on." Her companion replied, "Well, to judge by his pallor I should say they were loving him to death."

Rabbi Simon's Views.

In similar tone the vigorous, clear-thinking young leader of the Washington Hebrew Congregation, the Rabbi Abram Simon, Ph. D., writes, "The adjustment must come from the clergyman's own independence and leadership. The public expects the minister to exercise two rights, one of common sense and one of courage and conviction. He should use common sense in seeing and knowing when his physical energies are burning low and rest up for a time. He should have the courage of conviction in publicly announcing that the exercise of the pastoral duties are imperiling his health."

"We have a right to feel that no class of communicants understanding the true situation will be unreasonable or selfish. It is a rarity to find a minister who is both a successful pastor and an inspiring preacher at one and the same time. While pastoral duties cannot be slighted, yet the educational demands and the ever higher standards for clergymen dare not be ignored. The pulpit is not on the decline, nor are the days of eloquence behind us and modernly contemned. The preacher's message has changed. The new is enjoying the wealth of the educational opportunities. The average laborer has also an enhanced standpoint which the pulpit must respect, and he will not stand for drivel and chaff."

"The tremendous stress now upon the clergy is to train itself into the accepted leadership of society in its spiritual and ethical values and aspirations. And the minister who keeps in touch with the problems of life, who keeps abreast with the waves of modern education, who prepares a substantial sermon or two in one week, and who attends the stated services, and supervises his Sabbath school, who pays his occasional condolence and congratulatory calls, and tries to represent his people before the community, has enough to keep him busy seven days in the week."

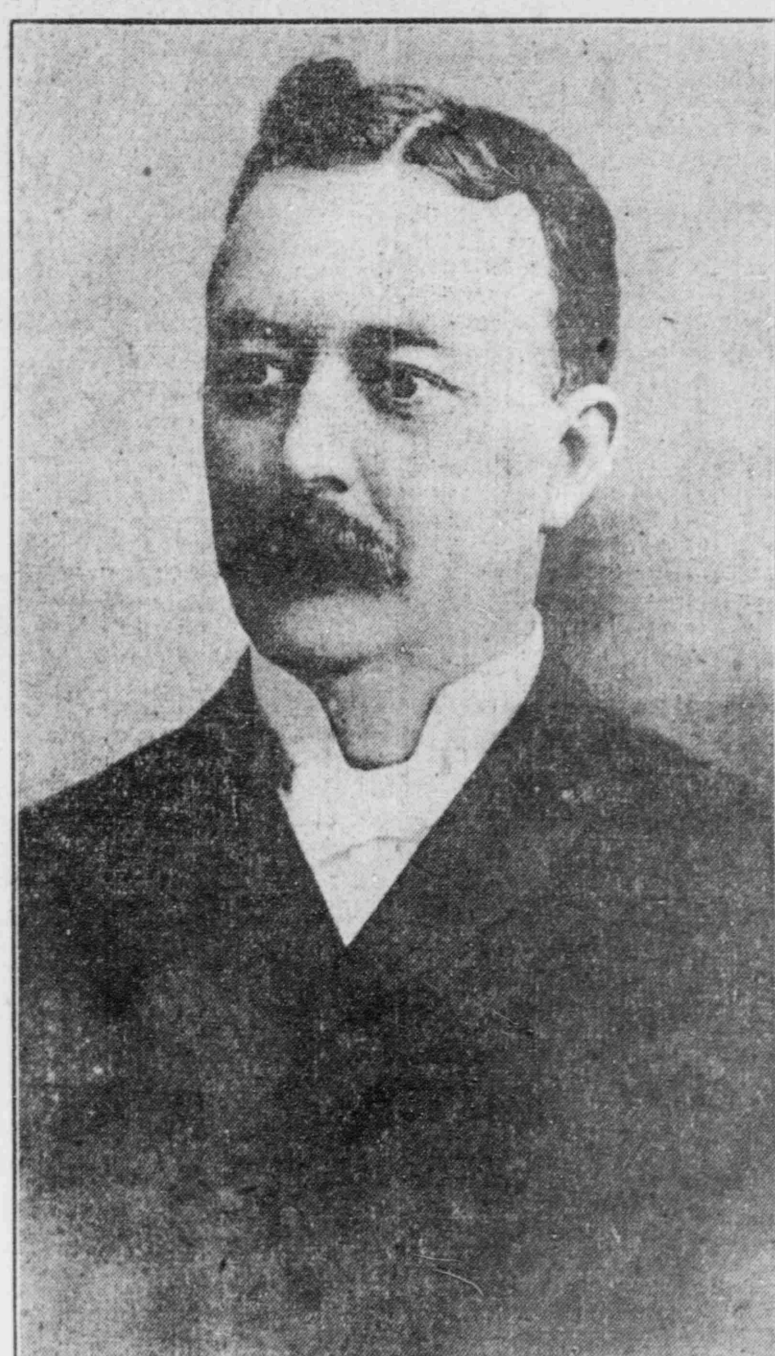
The rabbi does not think the question of a Sabbath for the clergy need be dignified into the proportions of a problem if the ministers have the courage to call a halt on the exactions of the people in requiring social pastoral calls; that part of the minister's duty takes most time and strength. He very properly said something about the leaders of the other congregations in their zeal for the cause, burning the candle at both ends, and being consumed by their own fires, that the more brilliant a blaze the more warmth it diffused, but the more rapid the destruction of the material causing the fire.

Makes But Few Changes.

Dr. Ulysses G. B. Pierce, of All Souls', affectionately called by his people "Chaplain," feels for himself no need of rest, because, as is the case with Rabbi Simon, he does not attempt any extensive pastoral visiting. He thinks there is much overstrain in the social visits on the part of the pastor.

In affliction or for necessary routine work of the church, certain duties can be performed by no one but the pastor in charge, but there is no practical reason why, because a man is at the head of a congregation, he should be expected to make visits having only a social value. If this never-ending requirement was removed there would be no need for a Sabbath for the man of God; he could plan his routine work, meet the extraordinary calls, and have enough time over to rest and develop his own spiritual nature between times.

Rev. Samuel H. Greene, D. D., of Calvary Baptist Church, expressed much interest in the suggestion that the ministers are guilty of violating a commandment. He warmly declared that his people were splendidly kind to him, giving all the practical and loving help that he could ask; that he was well provided for by them; allowed, even urged, to go out of town when he felt need of rest; that he had the help of much voluntary organized aid, the best aid a pastor could have, in fact, yet he emphatically declared that he could do much better work, and a great deal more of it, if one day in the week was his own, when he could have an entire change of routine, change of mental atmosphere, time for introspection, and for recovery of poise, which would come with obeying the letter of the fourth law of God.

REV. S. H. WOODROW,
OF THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.

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him back to his loved charge with clear-brain and steadier nerves; a little time each week, not to lay off his armor, but to refurbish it.

Minister a Busy Man.

Rev. Lloyd C. Douglas, of the Luther Place Memorial Church, writes, in part: "Oh, yes, the average minister is a busy man. It would be a great reproach if he were not busy in an age of such tireless activity. He has no time to rest on the Sabbath! No. But quite as much opportunity for rest as the energetic layman. But what the minister wants and needs most nowadays is not pity but co-operation. He is glad to work seven days. Help him to hold up his hands rather than to fold up his hands. Help him! That will make him forget how tired he is as he realizes some results from his ministry."

This has a fine, brave ring, but this energetic pastor may not yet have really felt "the burden and heat of the day." If one had any doubts as to the ceaseless activity of the modern city minister he had but to listen to the report for the past year read by Rev. Dr. S. H. Woodrow, of the First Congregational Church giving a brief outline of his work at home and abroad during 1909, to be convinced that there is hardly on earth a busier person than a successful pastor. Eighty-four sermons were delivered, and 244 services held, besides nearly 500 calls, and more than 1,500 letters of importance written by the minister for his own flock; this taking no account of the many persons received in the study for aid or advice. Then, in addition to home work "for the denomination, the community, and the cause of the kingdom at large," Dr. Woodrow assisted or lectured on nearly six score occasions, many of the meetings requiring long and rapid journeys.

Double Duty Too Great.

Speaking of a minister's work outside

his immediate parish, Rabbi Simon said one of his delights had been to work for what Dr. Woodrow well describes as "the community," but that he broke down under the double duty, and his congregation sent him off for a splendid rest abroad. Now he feels well, but confines himself to his own congregation.

When asked if he did not believe in the greatest good to the greatest number, and if he had a message for the pastor, Dr. Woodrow probably he a fitting show forth his light as broadly as he could, he was too modest to reply; but when the question was put, "If you had one day all your own, would you not be refreshed enough to care for your congregation and do outside work," the rabbi said "Yes."

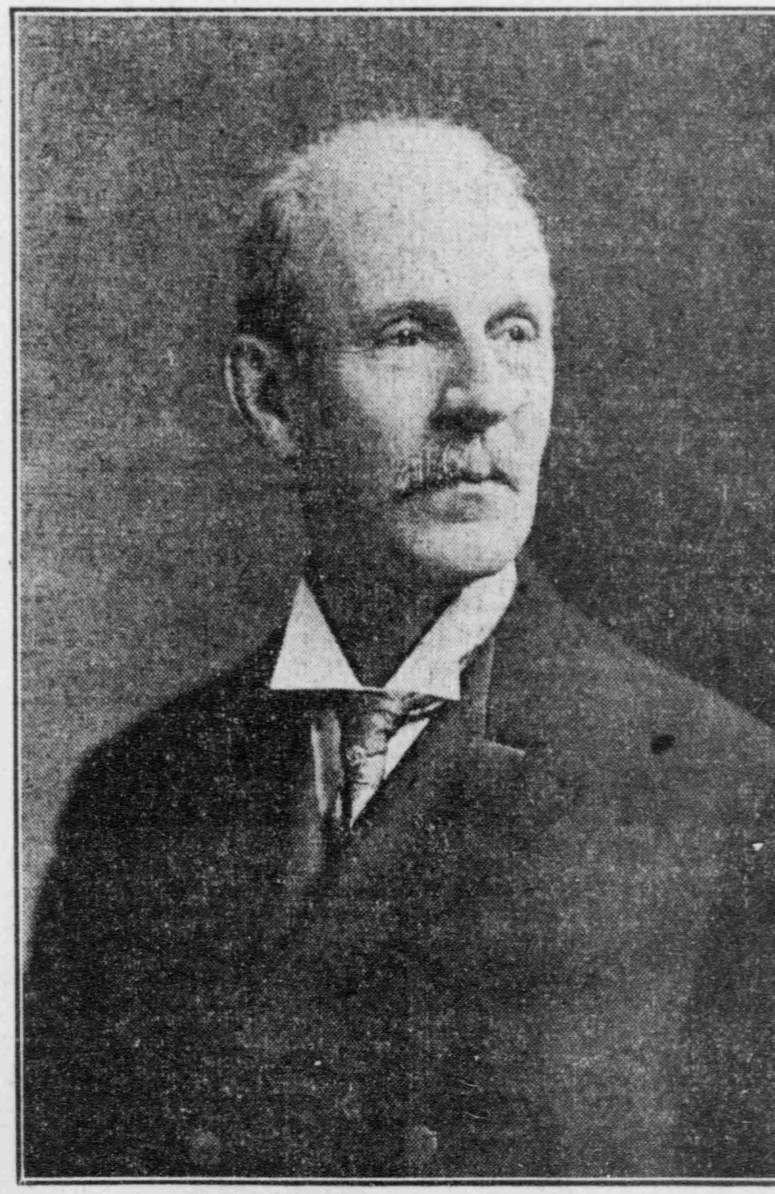
Theoretically, the clergy of the District is supposed to have Monday as "a day off." But the remarks of a small maid at the door of a minister's house last Monday would probably be a fitting description of all these rest days. "Yes, sir; this is just naturally the pastor's holiday, but he had to bury Mr. Thomas, and then Miss Jackson took a bad turn and he had to go to her; and he ain't had no dinner and cook's put out 'cause she's got something extra, as he's been late every day for a week."

Many of the ministers have an "at home" day on Monday so their people can meet with them. It is a pity that the people will talk so much "shop" to the pastor. Of course, he is deeply interested in everything pertaining to his people, still so is a doctor, yet one would not make a social call on a physician and discuss all the ill persons of their circle. Maybe the minister would delight in hearing an intelligent discussion of a new book; he gives out so much from his own strength, would it not be well to try to give him some fresh

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